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18 February 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Research and Reports

ATTENTION : Chief, Geography Division

SUBJECT : CIA/RR-G-11: Physical and Cultural Geography
of West China

REFERENCES : a. Memorandum from RQM/OIS to ORR/Geog. dated
7 January 1953, Subject: Area Study of Chinese
Provinces

b. K-9773

1. In October 1953 we received from ORR, Geography Division a comprehensive study on the Physical and Cultural Geography of West China, prepared in response to our request for a general area study on the provinces of Tsinghai, Kansu, Sikang and Northwestern Szechuan. This study was gratefully received by the interested CS staffs and area desks who will use it for long-range planning. We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in preparing the report and we are passing on to you certain specific comments and suggestions, made by members of the CS operational staffs, which we believe will interest you. Some of these comments pertain to the report as it answers the need for which it was requested; others suggest an expansion of the study to make it serve the needs of officers engaged in planning detailed clandestine operations as well as the long-range planner.

2. As to the manner of presentation of the material in the report, one officer commented that the photographs were the best part of the study and more photographs, if available, would be of great value. Shortening of the description of geography and topography, in his opinion would not detract from the study--particularly if proper topographic maps and photographs could be substituted. He felt that such things as topography, vegetation, clothing, etc. are better presented by photographs than by written text. The same person felt that a weak feature of the study was the map, which included too much on one map. He felt that it would have been better

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4. Much of the additional information suggested above is of the type normally included in the A and B studies, which we understand are now being prepared in your office. With a slightly different slant, therefore, this detailed data might be of great interest in most of the studies prepared for CS operational support for this area. In short, anything that a person will have to know to enable him to travel in an area, or be absorbed into the daily life of the area without being conspicuous or running afoul of security controls or other internal regulations, might well be included in a study of this nature.

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requests an area study, in order to direct research along the lines that will prove most useful. We recognize the difficulties which you may often experience due to the lack of information as to the exact purposes for which the study is required. Consequently we are making every effort to obtain more specific and detailed requests which will reflect, in so far as possible within the bounds of security, the use to which the study is to be put.

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Chief, RQW/CIS

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